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ASTONISHING X-MEN

JOSS WHEDON • JOHN CASSADAY

ONE OF THEM IS DEAD.

WE DON'T BELIEVE IT WAS THE COLOSSUS. OUR SURVEILLANCE WAS LONG-RANGE, AND UNTIL THE X-MEN CONTACT US...

ASSUMING THEY CAN.

IF WE COULD ONLY SPEAK WITH THE AUGURS--

THEIR LOYALTY IS TO KRUUN.

KRUUN BRANDED THEM AS MONSTERS-- ***SLAUGHTERED*** THEM-- UNTIL YOU CHAMPIONED THEIR GIFT AS NATURAL AND USEFUL!

I WAS NOT YET ENTIRELY OUT OF FAVOR THEN. NOW IT WOULD BE SUICIDE FOR THEM TO HELP US. WE MUSTN'T JUDGE.

THAT'S NOT WHAT THE PRYDE GIRL SAID.

TOLD THEM OUR SAD HISTORY, HAVE YOU?

THEY ASKED ABOUT YOU. ARE THEY NOT ALLIES? SHOULD I NOT--

NO, IT'S FINE. IT JUST EXPLAINS THIS SPARK IN YOU. ALREADY WE CHANGE IN THEIR THRALL.

ANY CHANGE IS BETTER THAN KRUUN'S MURDEROUS MADNESS.

UNTHINKING BRUTALITY DOES NOT MAKE ONE MAD, DAFI...

ONLY HOPE CAN DO THAT.

THE X-MEN WILL COME WHEN THEY CAN. THEY HAVE LOST A SOLDIER TODAY...

"LET'S HOPE THAT IT'S ONE THEY CAN SPARE."

RIGHT. WE ALL HAVE OUR WORK TO DO.

YOU READY TO TAKE A DIVE, KID?

WHAT? OH.

YES, SIR.

AND I SUPPOSE AGENT BRAND AND I ARE STILL LAB PARTNERS. HUZZAH.

LOCKHEED SHOULD RENDEZVOUS WITH THE TROOPS-- ASSUMING DANGER HASN'T KILLED THEM. AGREED?

THAT'S FINE, SURE.

EMMA.

WHAT WE DID BACK THERE, I'M... I'M NEVER GONNA BE OKAY WITH THAT--

AND YOUR APPROVAL IS NECESSARY FOR...?

THAT'S NOT THE POINT. I JUST THOUGHT...

...THAT I MIGHT NEED TO TALK?

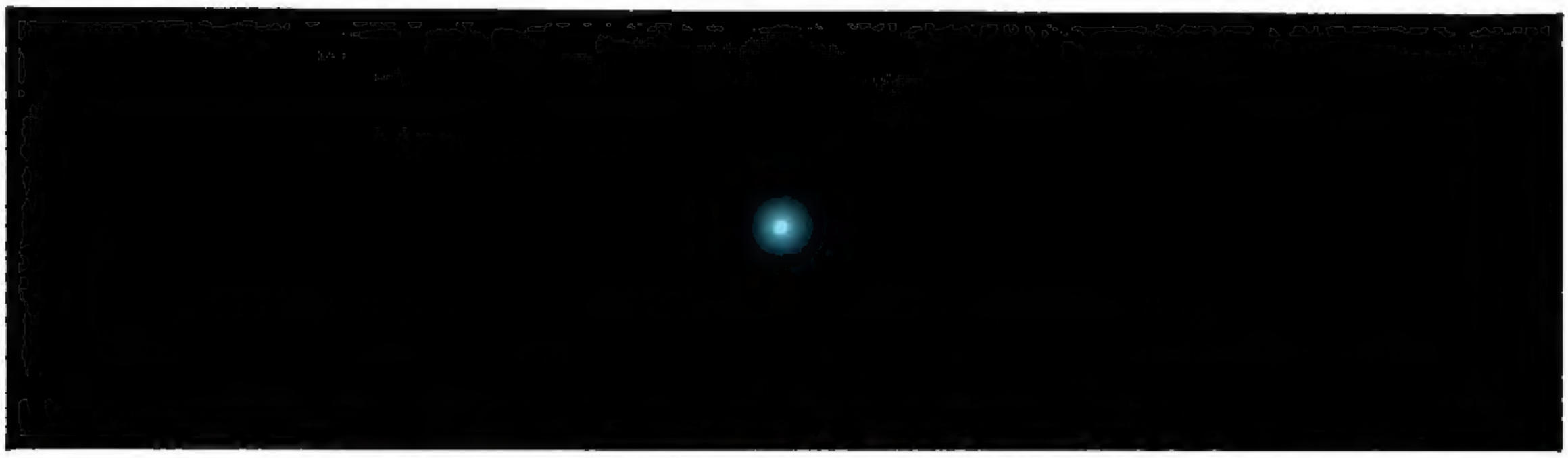
OH YES, LET'S *TALK*--LET'S SHARE OUR FEELINGS AND HAVE SLUMBER PARTIES AND TRY ON HATS.

YOU UNDERSTAND ME SO *TERRIBLY* WELL.

YEAH, HILARIOUS ME; I THOUGH YOU MIGHT ACTUALLY FEEL SOME KIND OF LOSS.

I AM A DIAMOND, MS. PRYDE.

I AM, BY DEFINITION, MY OWN BEST FRIEND.



SO THAT'S WHAT THAT'S LIKE.

YOU MAY BE FEELING SOME PAIN.

THE HUMAN BODY FINDS DEATH TO BE PARTICULARLY TRAUMATIC.

BUT WE READ YOUR BRAIN FUNCTIONS TO BE MORE OR LESS UNDAMAGED. WHEN YOU ARE ABLE TO SPEAK, YOU WILL TELL ME ABOUT *"LEVIATHAN"*.

IF YOU HESITATE, OR DISSEMBLE, THE PAIN YOU FEEL NOW WILL INCREASE A THOUSANDFOLD.

EMMA...

WHEREVER YOUR LOVER IS, SHE CANNOT HEAR YOU.

EVEN THE CURSED COLOSSUS CANNOT TEAR THROUGH OUR PRISON WALLS.

BUT SINCE YOU ARE SO SUDDENLY VERBAL...

LET'S TALK ABOUT LEVIATHAN.

KID...

YOU'RE FIRED.

WE GET BACK TO EARTH, YOU'RE DEMOTED TO EXCALISUCK OR SOME DAMN TEAM.

THEY WERE LINING UP CIVILIANS! TO KILL THEM!

THAT AIN'T THE MISSION.

HAVE YOU LOOKED THE WORD "*SUPERHERO*" UP? LIKE, GOOGLED IT OR SOMETHING?

AAHHH!!!

LOGAN!

CLIK

"THIS IS STARTING TO MAKE SENSE."

REALLY? BECAUSE THIS IS MAKING LESS AND LESS.

HOW SO?

THIS PROPHETIC ROCK, WITH PETER DESTROYING THE BREAKWORLD...THE STONE IS ANCIENT, AS IS THE EARTH IT WAS PULLED FROM.

BUT THE CARVING PATTERN, THE PRECISION ..

I'D GUESS IT WAS DONE WITH A LASER.

WE DON'T KNOW HOW FAR BACK BREAKWORLD TECHNOLOGIES REACH.

NO, WE DON'T.

WHAT WE DO KNOW IS HOW IT'S SUPPOSED TO GO DOWN.

I CAN'T READ THIS.

THE KEY ON THE RIGHT. TRANSLATION.

YOU CAN READ THIS.

I'VE STUDIED THIS RACE FOR A WHILE. PICKED UP SOME LANGUAGE.

YOU SPEAK IT?

ENOUGH TO ORDER A STEAK. HIT THE DAMN KEY.

SO.

THIS IS THE WAY THE WORLD ENDS.

GNAAAAAAGLKH!

LEVIATHAN.

WHAT IS IT?

WHO IS IT?

THE PAIN CAN END.

IF I...HAD MY POWERS...

YOUR LITTLE MUTANT PARLOR TRICKS, YES. BUT YOU LOST THEM. AND YOUR FRIENDS AREN'T COMING TO SAVE YOU.

I DON'T EVEN THINK THEY'RE FOLLOWING YOUR ORDERS--YOUR LAST WISHES, AS FAR AS THEY KNOW. SAD.

YOU... TRYING TO MAKE ME CRY?

YOU'RE NOT AFRAID OF PAIN.

BUT YOU CAN'T BE NAÏVE ENOUGH TO THINK THAT PAIN IS MY ONLY WEAPON.

A HUMAN MAN CAN ONLY WATCH SO MANY PARTS OF HIMSELF REMOVED BEFORE HIS MIND GOES.

NOT JUST YOUR LIMBS, CYCLOPS. ORGANS, SKIN...I CAN KEEP YOU ALIVE IN A JAR.

"AND THEN THERE'S YOUR X-MEN. CAN YOU STAND TO WATCH ME WORK ON THEM?

"THE ONE WHO HEALS IS PROBABLY TOO VOLATILE, AND RECORDS INDICATE YOU MIGHT NOT MIND A LITTLE DISCOMFORT IN HIS CASE.

"BUT THE NEW ONE, THE YOUNG WOMAN..

"WILL YOU WATCH HER PICKED APART?"

WHERE IS AGHANNE.

WHERE IS COLOSSUS.

AND WHAT. IS *LEVIATHAN?*

GOODNESS!

FORGIVE US. WE WERE DETECTED AND HAD TO TRAVEL THE LAST FEW MILES WITHIN THE GROUND.

PHASING SOMETHING SO BIG, SO FAR... AND YOUR... EARTH...

KATYA!

I KNOW NOTHING OF HUMAN HEALING...

THE MATERIALS IN YOUR EARTH ARE HARMFUL SOMEHOW.

TINGLING... OOH...

YOU SHOULD NOT HAVE PUT YOURSELVES IN SUCH DANGER TO COME TO ME.

WE HAD NO CHOICE, AGHANNE.

THE END IS COMING.

ARE YOU READY TO DO YOUR PART?

IS EVERYTHING *REALLY* ORANGE..?

"IT'S NOT THE SUN."

SORRY--MY HEAD IS STUFFED WITH BUILDING PLANS.

WHAT'S NOT THE SUN?

THE PROPHECY. IT TALKS ABOUT PULLING THE LIGHT FROM THE BREAKWORLD. *"THROUGH THE TEMPLE OF POWER."*

KRUUN'S THRONEHOUSE SITS ON A REACTOR. IT POWERS EVERYTHING, LITERALLY BY PULLING ENERGY FROM THE PLANET'S CORE.

AND SOMEONE COULD POSSIBLY GET INSIDE, DESTABILIZE IT...

SOMEONE MADE OF METAL, MAYBE.

DO YOU GET IT YET?

IT'S NOT A PROPHECY.

IT'S A PLAN.

THAT'S STILL JUST A THEORY--

THE INSCRIPTION IS ABSURDLY SPECIFIC; IT'S PRACTICALLY AN INSTRUCTION MANUAL ON DESTROYING THE BREAKWORLD.

AND WHOM DO YOU THINK WOULD-- HOLD IT.

I FOUND HIM.

WE'RE CLOSE?

WE'LL BE AT THE PRISON ITSELF IN THIRTY SECONDS.

GOD..HE'S IN SO MUCH PAIN...

I DON'T KNOW IF HE CAN TAKE IN ALL THESE SCHEMATICS...

OH, SCOTT...

YOU WORRY TOO MUCH, SWEETIE.

YOU CAN'T JUST HAVE CALLED ME "SWEETIE."

YOUR WITCH IS NEARBY.

IT WILL AVAIL YOU NOTHING--SHE CANNOT BREACH THESE WALLS.

THEY'RE NICE WALLS. WOULD YOU LIKE ME TO START ANSWERING YOUR QUESTIONS NOW?

"PETER--COLOSSUS--IS WITH AGHANNE. SHOULD BE ON THEIR WAY."

BUT YOU ORDERED HIM--

--TO STAY AWAY FROM HER, HOW COULD YOU HAVE KNOWN THAT OH MY GOD DID YOU HAVE SOME KIND OF *SURVEILLANCE* DEVICE ON YOUR OWN SHIP THAT WE STOLE?

YOU KNEW I WAS WATCHING.

EMMA, HELP ME.

I, UH...

RIGHT. I'M LINKING YOU ALL PSYCHICALLY. TRY TO KEEP TALKING NORMALLY

WE NEED TO GET CLOSE TO KRUUN THAT WON'T HAPPEN UNLESS HE THINKS WE'RE HELPLESS.

SO I'LL TAKE THE REPAIR SHIP AND GET MYSELF CAPTURED.

THERE'S A GOOD CHANCE THEY'LL KILL YOU, BOSS.

SUPP[illegible] THE LEADER.

THAT'S WHY I'M ACTING LIKE ONE

THEY'RE GAINING...

THEY BROUGHT PETER BACK TO LIFE THEY'LL DO THE SAME WITH ME IF THEY THINK I HAVE INFORMATION THEY NEED.

A SECRET WEAPON?

THAT WOULD WORK...

WE NEED A NAME: SOMETHING OMINOUS AND IMPOSING.

OUR ACE IN THE HOLE.

LEVIATHAN?

OH, HONEY, THAT'S IRRESISTIBLE! "LEVIATHAN."

KRUUN'LL WORK ME OVER FOR A WHILE TRYING TO GET THAT OUT OF ME. THE REST OF YOU GET TO WORK.

LEVI[illegible]

EMMA, I'LL NEED SCHEMATICS OF THE PRISON. LOGAN AND HISAKO, GET YOURSELVES CAPTURED IN A FEW HOURS SO WE'VE GOT A FORCE INSIDE.

I OBJECT!

WHAT?

BUGGER ME, WAS THAT ACTING?

IS NOT COURTROOM DRAMA, KATYA.

GUNN[illegible] YOU

SHUT UP! I'M NOT GOOD AT HAVING TWO CONVERSATIONS AT ONCE. AND I HATE SCOTT'S PLAN!

YOU MEAN YOU "OBJECT" TO IT. BUT I'M GONNA ALLOW IT.

S#!%. I'M GONNA CRACK UP. I'M CRACKING UP.

SAY SOMETHING CYNICAL.

RIGHT. RIGHT.

EXCUSE ME, I'M THE ONE WHO'S GONNA

AGENT BRAND, YOU AND HANK WORK THAT PROPHECY. PETER, BRING AGHANNE INTO THE FOLD IF YOU CAN. BE OUTSIDE THE PRISON IN A FEW HOURS. BRING EVERYONE.

FK, S.

STA[illegible] KRU[illegible] FR[illegible] EVE[illegible]

I'D BETTER GO BEFORE KITTY TRIES TO ACT AGAIN.

EMMA

SCOTT, IF KRUUN HAS YOU AT HIS MERCY...

DON'T WORRY, MY LOVE...

"LEVIATHAN" WILL SAVE ME

LIES.

THE GREAT HUMAN WEAPON.

PATHETIC.

I'D SAY *"PATHETIC"* WOULD BE FALLING FOR THEM.

ESPECIALLY KITTY'S.

AND FOR WHAT!??

THERE IS NO *"LEVIATHAN"*-- THERE IS *NO ONE* WHO CAN SAVE YOU! WHY DO YOU BOTHER WITH PLOTS?

WHAT OTHER LIES HAVE YOU TOLD?!!

DAMN, SUMMERS.

IS THAT...?

YES.

WE GOT TROOPS TO EXTRACT!

MOVE MOVE MOVE!

OH, SCOTT...

TO ME, MY X-MEN.

LET'S FINISH THIS.

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EMPIRE